

COMMUNITY, COUNSELING AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, INC.

Corporate Office Building
471 East Mercury Street
Butte, Montana 59701

phone: (406) 782-0417 fax: (406) 782-6964

email: corporate@ccscorp.com website: www.ccscorp.com

Board of Directors: Joe Murphy, President • Connie Kenney, Vice-President • Jim Graham, Secretary • Fred Stradinger, Treasurer • Don Peoples, Board Member • Pat Fleming, Board Member • Wayne Harper, Board Member • Kathy Fassio, Board Member • Father Tom Haffey, Board Member • John Kasperick, Board Member

Corporate Staff: Mike Thatcher, CEO • Steve McArthur, Director Community Correctional Programs • Perry Hawbaker, CFO • Colleen O'Leary, Director Human Resources • Dave Boyd, Director Treatment Programs & Services • Ryan Lynch Director of Development & Administration

Bismarck Transition Center
Kevin Arthaud, Adm.
2001 Lee Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-222-3440 Fax 701-222-3599

Butte Pre-Release Center
Women's Transitional Center
Jay Grant, Adm.
58-68 W. Broadway
Butte, MT 59701
BPRC 406-782-2316
WTC 406-782-6446 Fax 406-723-1170

Connections Corrections Program
Dave Boyd, Adm.
111 W. Broadway
Butte, MT 59701
406-782-6626 Fax 406-782-6676

Discovery House
Carole Kovacich, Adm.
65 Sheep Gulch Road
Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-3842 Fax 406-563-2451

Gallatin Re-Entry Facility
Melissa Kelly, Adm.
675 S. 16 Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-994-0300 Fax 406-994-0306

Martin Hall Juvenile Detention Facility
Robert Palmquist, Adm.
P.O. Box 670
Medical Lake, WA 99022
509-299-7733 Fax 509-299-1447

Nexus Program
Marcie Conmy Adm.
P.O. Box 1200
Lewistown, MT 59457
406-535-6660 Fax 406-535-6665

RYO Correctional Facility
Travis Hettick, Adm.
360 Galen Street
Deer Lodge, MT 59722
406-693-9975 Fax 406-693-9988

START Program
George Strutzel, Adm.
801 MT Hwy 48
Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-7002 Fax 406-563-5069

WATCh Program
Alex Vukovich, Adm.
Box G
Warm Springs, MT 59756
406-693-2272 Fax 406-693-2276

WATCh East
Deb Dion, Adm.
700 Little Street
Glendive, MT 59330
406-377-6001 Fax 406-377-6004

TO: Members of the Montana Law and Justice Interim Committee

FROM: Mike Thatcher, *Chief Executive Officer*
Community, Counseling & Correctional Services, Incorporated
Butte, Montana

DATE: September 20, 2013

RE: *SJR 3 - Study of the Board of Pardons and Parole*

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Community, Counseling and Correctional Services, Incorporated (CCCS), I am writing in reference to the above study and to also provide additional information regarding our private, not-for-profit corporation's position, as the members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee moves forward in your deliberations. Prior to expanding on CCCS' position, I am providing you with a brief provide summary of our organization.

CCCS is a Montana-based, not-for-profit 501(c)-3 entity headquartered in Butte, Montana. CCCS has been providing a wide variety of correctional services for numerous state agencies, specifically the Montana Department of Corrections (MDOC), since the Butte Pre-Release Center Men's Program was activated in December 1983. During the course of the past twenty-nine plus (29+) years, CCCS has continually nurtured and enhanced those long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships it maintains, not only with the MDOC, but also with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (NDDOCR), the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP), the office of United States Federal Probation, as well as with multiple counties in Montana, North Dakota and Washington.

CCCS currently operates multiple juvenile and adult correctional and treatment facilities for the aforementioned local, state and federal agencies. CCCS was organized under the laws of the State of Montana and the corporation's oversight is maintained by and is the responsibility of a ten (10) member, volunteer, non-compensated Board of Directors, many of whom have remained on the Board since the corporation's inception. CCCS' operational portfolio includes service delivery provisions for adult and juveniles through our current program operations in Montana, North Dakota and Washington. The expertise offered by CCCS includes, but is not limited to, facility management of several adult and juvenile secure and community-based residential programs, addictions treatment programs, as well as a number of non-residential services.

Prior to addressing our concerns relative to any consideration given to abolish parole in Montana, I respectfully direct your attention to a couple of programs that validate CCCS' correctional experience. CCCS' operation

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Exhibit 17

Butte Pre-Release Center (BPRC)

The BPRC is a one-hundred, sixty (160) bed pre-release center located in Butte, Montana. It is a program that houses adult, male offenders. The BPRC has approximately fifty-five (55) employees. The BPRC began operations in December 1983. Thousands of offenders have successfully completed the BPRC and the Women's Transitional Center (WTC) – (see below) - and have paid millions of dollars in taxes, restitution and family support as a means of "giving back" or "paying it forward." During this last fiscal year, program residents of both the BPRC & WTC donated over fourteen thousand (14,000) hours to ongoing community service projects in the Butte community to major events such as the Montana Folk Festival, the Montana Irish Festival – An-Ri-Rah and Evel Knievel Days.

Women's Transitional Center (WTC)

The WTC is a sixty (60) bed pre-release center that is co-located within the same facility as the BPRC noted above. Although housed within the same physical plant as the BPRC, the WTC is a separate community-based program that was specifically designed to assist adult, female offenders through their process of transition back into the community mainstream. I assure you that I could reach out to numerous female offenders, who have successfully completed the WTC and the subsequent conditions of their community placements, albeit on probation, or parole, which would validate the success of community-based programming and certainly parole, as an effective release mechanism. The WTC employs approximately forty-two (42) employees. The WTC became operational in June of 1992.

Connections Corrections Programs (CCP)

CCP is actually two separate programs, totaling one-hundred, four (104) beds, which are located in Butte (CCP) and Warm Springs (CCP-West), Montana, respectively. Both of the CCP programs provide sixty (60) day addictions treatment program for adult, male offenders. The respective CCP programs each employ approximately thirty-two (32) employees. CCCS began operations of CCP in March of 1998. CCP has had over 5,000 admissions and has a documented ninety-three percent (93%) program completion rate.

Warm Springs Addiction Treatment & Change Program (WATCH)

WATCH is a one-hundred, fifteen (115) bed facility located at Warm Springs, Montana. WATCH offers a six (6) month Modified Therapeutic Treatment Community for adult male, fourth or subsequent DUI offenders that are referred by the Montana Department of Corrections (MDOC). WATCH has approximately sixty-four (64) employees. WATCH opened its doors in February of 2002 and to date, there have been 2,265 admissions, with 1,923 successful program completions. CCCS has received data, as has been collected by the MDOC, in conjunction with the University of Montana that demonstrates approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the program's participants, who have successfully completed the program, have remained compliant with the terms of their probation supervision, which far exceeds the original target projection of fifty percent (50%).

WATCH reflects that treatment which embraces intensive levels of programming for longer periods of time (duration) enhances the likelihood of greater offender success.

Reintegrating Youthful Offenders (RYO) Juvenile Correctional Facility (RYO)

RYO is a secure, state-of-the-art juvenile detention facility, located on the former Galen, Montana state campus and is currently accredited through the American Correctional Association (ACA). RYO provides long-term placements and correctional services/programming for sixty (60) youthful offenders, who are sentenced to the custodial control of the FBOP, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the United States Marshall's Service and those referred for placement by a number of Native American Tribes. RYO is widely recognized as one of the finest juvenile correctional facilities in the United States.

WATCH-East (Glendive, Montana)

WATCH-East delivers a six (6) month Modified Therapeutic Treatment Community primarily for adult, female offenders, although it does house and treat a smaller population of male offenders, all of whom are classified as fourth or subsequent DUI offenders. WATCH-East has approximately thirty (30) employees and CCCS began operating WATCH-East in February 2005. As of this writing, there have been 733 admissions to WATCH-East and out of that total, 670 completed the program, which is a ninety-two percent (92%) success rate. If requested, I would provide the committee with all of the data compiled since WATCH-East's activation. More importantly, I strongly encourage the committee members to tour all of CCCS' facilities, at their convenience.

Gallatin County Work-Release and Re-Entry Program (GCRP)

The GCRP is a 40-bed facility situated on property owned by Gallatin County in Bozeman, Montana. It is a unique, multiple-use facility that includes pre-release, work-release, drug court sanctions, detention, and re-entry, for adult, male offenders. GCRP has approximately twenty-four (24) employees. The GCRP opened for operations in mid-December 2005 and to date, there have been 565 program admissions.

Sanction Treatment Assessment and Revocation Transition Program (START)

START is a new \$12.3 million, 40,000 square-foot flagship, state-of-the-art facility that was constructed near Anaconda and began service delivery in August 2010. START has a capacity of 142 regular beds and 10 special needs beds. START provides an assessment/sanction center for adult males who have violated conditions of community placement including pre-release, parole, or probation. START has fifty-five (55) employees. In 2010-2011, there were five-hundred, fifty-five (555) revocations admissions, one-hundred seven (107) sanctions admits and one-hundred fourteen (114) other admissions. In 2011-2012, there were eight-hundred, seventy-two (872) admissions @ START. By reducing admissions into the prison system, the START Program has generated tremendous savings for the taxpayers of Montana and the MDOC. The original goal of the MDOC was to divert fifty percent (50%) of offenders under community supervision, who have committed technical violations, from being returned to prison. START has been incredibly successful in that on a consistent basis, it has diverted approximately ninety percent (90%) of offenders from prison,

with an average length of stay @ START of fifty-five (55) days. Prior to START, offenders who violated the terms and conditions of their community supervision, were returned to Montana State Prison, which resulted in subsequent lengths of stay that historically ranged from six (6) months to two (2) years. Again, this example of longer stays in prison was related to those situations when an offender received a technical violation for failing to comply with the tenets of his community supervision. START has also been tremendously successful from a fiscal point of view in that the cost-savings for the taxpayers of Montana have been significant, having saved millions of dollars since being activated. Additionally, START has allowed the system to salvage community placements and return many offenders back to their respective, prior community placements, with additional treatment, as well as modified conditions of supervision. This program has truly demonstrated its ability to "save dollars and save lives (offenders)" and has diverted many families from seeking public assistance because the primary care-giver was returned to the community and in most cases, was able to obtain meaningful employment in order to provide for his family.

NEXUS Program (Lewistown, Montana)

Nexus is an eighty-two (82) bed methamphetamine treatment facility located in Lewistown, Montana. NEXUS has approximately forty-four (44) employees. Nexus began accepting adult, male offenders on June 1, 2007. During the reporting period of 2007-2012, there were five-hundred, ninety-nine (599) admissions to Nexus with five-hundred, seventeen (517) subsequently released back into a community placement. There have been four-hundred, ten (410) successful completions from Nexus with eighty-three percent (83%) of these individuals successfully complying with the terms of their aftercare programs. Dr. Tim Conley of the University of Montana has completed two (2) studies on the Nexus Program and upon the request of the committee; this information can be made available for their review. I bring this to your attention in that the outcome data, which has been independently collected by Dr. Conley and his staff, clearly documents measurable, successful outcomes that, in turn, save taxpayer dollars and as just as important, save lives.

Additional Programs and Services

Other programs and services provided and managed by CCCS include the *Transitional Living Program* (TLP) which originally began in August of 1993 as the then Alternative Reporting Component of the BPRC. Currently, TLP is a transitional living, daily-reporting program for adult, male and female offenders. The *Enhanced Supervision Program* (ESP) which began in April of 2006 provides contract services to those offenders who are under community supervision as established by the Butte office of Adult Probation and Parole. These intermediate sanctions are extremely cost-effective and have provided parole and probation staff with non-residential alternatives that continue to hold the offender accountable under the terms of elevated levels of supervision and programming in lieu of secure jail and/or prison placements.

Through these various programs, CCCS has been involved in a cooperative and collaborative dynamic with the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) for thirty (30) years. We are dedicated to the same mission, and our roles, while different, aim to complement and support our common goals. It is clear that the BOPP, through several Governors, MDOC Directors, and numerous Legislative Sessions and through the dedicated service of many BOPP Members, has been the most consistent entity within the Montana corrections system. The BOPP has never wavered on its strong

commitment to manage risk through fair and consistent mandates that are based upon public safety, victim concerns, successful inmate re-entry and the intelligent and diverse provision of available state resources. The BOPP makes every effort to encourage and enhance the offenders' motivation to change and has granted parole to thousands of our successful clients. CCCS believes in and supports these very important and essential core philosophies.

Since 2001, the BOPP has been acknowledged for correctional excellence through its accreditation by the American Corrections Association (ACA), which is the oldest and largest correctional association in the world. The majority of CCCS' programs have also received this acknowledgment of excellence. This accreditation assures that both CCCS and the BOPP maximize a best practices approach for effective criminal justice programs through self-evaluation and outside, independent review.

CCCS is very confident that, as the members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee complete their objective study, they will conclude that the BOPP and "the parole release system" are critical and efficiently administered programs. The administration, staff and members of the BOPP complete multiple tasks daily that extraordinarily affect thousands of lives. It will become clear that more resources supporting and enhancing the professional abilities of the whole of the BOPP are needed.

On a personal note, I want to share with the committee members that I have worked in corrections for thirty-two plus (32+) years. In the early 1980's, I was employed as a Correctional Counselor at Montana State Prison for approximately two (2) years. During this time, I would often observe many offenders, who were placed under community-supervision, albeit probation, parole and/or via a pre-release placement, be violated and returned to Montana State Prison. My observation at the time was that parole/probation and/or pre-release programs were extremely punitive and were designed to produce failure rather than success. In October of 1983, I began working at the Butte Pre-Release Center, as a Treatment Supervisor and I have remained in the non-profit sector since that time. The point I am trying to relate is that when I worked at the prison, the only stories I heard were those conveyed to me from those inmates who had failed. Ironically, it did not dawn on me at the time that I never had the opportunity to talk to the many offenders who were successful in their community placements and/or under supervision. It was not until I began my community corrections career at the BPRC, that I began to realize that the greater percentage of offenders, who were placed on community supervision, do in fact change their thinking, change their behaviors and successfully re-acclimate back into their community.

Unfortunately, I believe there appears to be a very vocal minority, who has received a great deal of attention regarding their criticisms of community supervision, especially regarding parole as a release mechanism. Often times, their criticism is related to family members who have failed in their community placement and/or under community supervision. On occasion those who comprise this minority fail to accept the need to hold their own family members accountable. Additionally, due to the serious and sensitive nature of the offense, they are upset that a family member has not been granted a timely parole, even though those broad-based and comprehensive responsibilities of each Parole Board Member requires them to consider factors such as public safety, deliberate and consider the impact(s) on victims and/or communities, gauge the level(s) of offender motivation relative to investing in and successfully complete requisite treatment and programming, institutional

behavior, time served and several other measurable criteria that make the Parole Board Members' decisions extremely challenging, even under the best of circumstances.

If necessitated, I would be more than happy to reach out to various, diverse offenders who, over the course of the last thirty (30) years, have completed the various CCCS' programs and were successfully released, in most cases, under parole supervision. I believe there are many who would be willing to provide testimony consistent with why they were able to successfully complete the conditions of their community supervision. I assure you through all of our programs, CCCS can provide testimony and relative outcome data that quality programs/services and parole does, in fact work. Being placed on parole is not an easy undertaking; however, it does hold offenders stringently accountable, while at the same time, provides them with the opportunity to successfully re-establish ties within their community and restore their family relationships.

I want to thank the members of the Law and Justice Interim Committee in advance for any consideration you may afford to this correspondence. CCCS offers our unequivocal support to the Board of Pardons and Parole and strongly encourages the members of the committee to "stay the course." In other words, CCCS believes that if it is not broken, what is it then that we are trying to fix? CCCS' thirty (30) year old partnership with the BOPP has been mutually-beneficial and by working collaboratively, collectively and cooperatively, many lives have been salvaged and many taxpayer dollars have been saved.

In closing, it is CCCS' position that it would be a tremendous travesty to eliminate parole as a release mechanism and in its stead develop mandatory, minimum sentences and/or other sentencing alternatives that CCCS firmly believes would produce a devastating impact on the release process, and would be cost-prohibitive to the MDOC and ultimately Montana's taxpayers. If I can provide any additional information, relative to the successful clients who participated in our numerous programs, or if I can speak to any other issues or concerns, please do not hesitate in contacting me. Additionally, as you move forward in your review, I invite any members of the committee to tour any of CCCS' programs and visit with our respective Program Administrators and staff. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,



MIKE THATCHER,
Chief Executive Officer
CCCS, Inc.
MT/mp

cc: CCCS Board of Directors